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Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the fifth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), notably on efforts towards the achievement of a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon and a long-term solution based on the principles and elements outlined in paragraph 8 of the resolution. It provides a comprehensive assessment of the steps taken to implement resolution 1701 (2006) since my last report was issued on 28 June 2007 (S/2007/392) and highlights both continuing progress on the implementation of the resolution and areas of concern that continue to impede the establishment of a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution between the parties.

2. I am pleased to report that there remains an enduring commitment by the Governments of Lebanon and Israel to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the Lebanese Armed Forces have continued to work to ensure that the area south of the Litani River is not utilized for hostile activities and that it is free of any unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons. Four months after the attack against UNIFIL, which resulted in the death of six peacekeepers from the Spanish contingent, the peacekeeping force has continued to face security challenges in southern Lebanon.

3. After more than a year of intensive efforts by the facilitator, a first encouraging step was recently achieved with the exchange of humanitarian gestures between Israeli and the concerned Lebanese sides. I hope that these developments will lead to the release of the two abducted soldiers, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser, and a solution to all of the humanitarian aspects of resolution 1701 (2006).

4. I am deeply concerned that Lebanon's domestic political crisis, including that related to the presidential question, has continued unabated in spite of domestic and international efforts to resolve it. This has seriously hindered progress on the implementation of key aspects of resolution 1701 (2006). In addition, grave security incidents, such as the terrorist attack of 19 September 2007, which killed member of Parliament Antoine Ghanem and seven others, injured many people and caused extensive material damage, continue to threaten Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. The explosion, the largest since that which killed former

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Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, was the fourth assassination targeting a parliamentarian belonging to the 14 March coalition.

5. I commend and congratulate the Government of Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces for their defeat of Fatah al-Islam terrorists in the northern Palestinian camp of Nahr-el Bared after a long and bloody battle, thus successfully confronting this serious challenge to the country's sovereignty. It is essential that the Lebanese Government and the Lebanese Armed Forces strengthen their vigilance to ensure Lebanon's security.

6. Developments in the months to come will be crucial for the achievement of further progress on key issues related to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and for the achievement of a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution between Lebanon and Israel.

II. Attacks against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

7. On 16 July 2007, an improvised explosive device was detonated by remote control next to a UNIFIL Tanzanian military police checkpoint, in the area of al Qassmiyeh along the Litani River. The explosion caused material damage to the vehicle but no injuries. No one claimed responsibility. The Lebanese authorities immediately launched an investigation, which led to the arrest of two suspects. Three other suspects are still at large. According to preliminary results of the investigation, the attack was initiated and planned by a militant group with links to Fatah al-Islam and its goal was to inflict serious casualties. The explosives used in the attack, as well as other logistical support, reportedly came from Palestinian refugee camps in the area between Sidon and Tyre. I commend the Lebanese authorities for their swift and thorough investigation and hope that they will identify and bring to justice all the perpetrators involved in this attack.

8. In October, the Lebanese authorities arrested six Palestinian militants from Burj Ash Shamili refugee camp in the area of Tyre for planning and attempting terrorist attacks against UNIFIL. The authorities also confiscated explosive and detonation devices. This group reportedly attempted to attack UNIFIL patrols on the coastal road between the Litani River and Tyre on two occasions in August, but both attempts failed for technical reasons. According to the preliminary investigation, the cell was directed by the same militant group associated with Fatah al-Islam (see para. 7 above). These incidents highlight the danger posed to UNIFIL by radical armed elements within the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

9. Investigations by both Lebanese and Spanish national authorities into the attack of 24 June 2007, which killed six members of UNIFIL's Spanish contingent, are ongoing. The Lebanese authorities regularly consult with UNIFIL. At this stage, however, the perpetrators remain at large and unknown and there has been no claim of responsibility for this attack. I fervently hope that, through the efforts of the Lebanese authorities, the Spanish authorities and UNIFIL, those responsible for this terrorist attack will be identified and brought to justice.

III. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

A. Respect for the Blue Line

10. The military and security situation in the UNIFIL area of operations has been generally quiet since the submission of my last report of 28 June 2007 (S/2007/392). There has been no breach of the cessation of hostilities and the parties continue to pledge commitment and show determination to uphold the agreement. I am pleased to report that there was a reduction in the number of incidents along the line of withdrawal (also known as the Blue Line) between the Israel Defense Forces and the Lebanese Armed Forces as a direct result of the improved liaison and coordination arrangements between the parties and UNIFIL.

11. The investigation into the Katyusha rocket attack against Israel on 17 June 2007 is still ongoing and the Lebanese authorities have informed UNIFIL that they are following concrete leads and are hopeful that they will be able to identify the perpetrators.

12. UNIFIL has reported a significant number of Israeli air violations of Lebanese airspace through jet and unmanned aerial vehicles on an almost daily basis. Some of these air violations were at low altitude, breaking the sound barrier over populated areas in southern Lebanon and creating fear and apprehension among the population. Such air violations further escalate tensions and increase the chance of a security incident, as shown on 25 October when the Lebanese Armed Forces opened fire on Israeli aircraft. The Force Commander of UNIFIL and my senior representatives in the region, as well as a number of interested Member States, have voiced concern and called on Israel to cease these air violations. The Government of Lebanon continues to protest these as a serious violation of Lebanese sovereignty and of resolution 1701 (2006). The Government of Israel maintains that they are a necessary security measure that will continue until its two abducted soldiers are released and the measures set out in paragraphs 14 and 15 of resolution 1701 (2006) are implemented in full.

13. UNIFIL also reported a number of minor ground violations by local Lebanese shepherds and hunters, in particular in the Shab'a Farms area. As noted in past reports, these violations, which in some cases may have been inadvertent, can lead to accidental incidents and an unintended escalation of tension along the Blue Line, especially since, on some occasions, the shepherds and hunters carry personal weapons. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces are seeking to curb the activities of local hunters, given that the presence of unauthorized armed personnel south of the Litani River is in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006).

14. In my previous report, I underscored the importance of visibly marking the Blue Line, especially in sensitive areas and where there is a considerable distance between the Blue Line and the Israeli technical fence. UNIFIL remains engaged with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces in finalizing the technical process for marking the Blue Line on the ground. In the meantime, I am pleased to report that UNIFIL has started a pilot project with both the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces to visibly mark a six kilometre portion of the Blue Line in the western sector, in the general area of Alma Ash Sha'b. The first Blue Line barrel was positioned on 26 September 2007, and measurements for additional barrels are ongoing.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

15. The regular tripartite meetings held by the UNIFIL Force Commander with senior representatives of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces have become an important mechanism, building confidence between the two parties, both of which show a strong commitment to these proceedings, which aim to address key security and military operational issues, prevent incidents and violations and enhance liaison and coordination arrangements. The complexity of the issues on the agenda, however, makes progress in formulating common understanding at times incremental and slow.

16. In this regard, the working paper on the technical procedures for marking the Blue Line is still under consideration and it is hoped that it will be finalized in parallel with the ongoing pilot project to visibly mark the line on the ground. At the same time, discussions on the temporary security arrangements for northern Ghajar remain deadlocked on the issue of the duration of the arrangements. The Force Commander is undertaking bilateral consultations to identify possible approaches to overcome the impasse. The Israel Defense Forces remain in control of the part of the village of Ghajar north of the Blue Line and the small adjacent area inside Lebanese territory, although it does not maintain a permanent military presence there. As of mid-September 2007, the Lebanese Armed Forces patrol the road outside the perimeter fence around this area. As I recalled in my last report (S/2007/392), so long as the Israel Defense Forces remain in northern Ghajar, Israel will not have completed its withdrawal from southern Lebanon in accordance with its obligations under resolution 1701 (2006).

17. Coordination and liaison between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces, which has continued to evolve and strengthen in many areas, is central for the effective implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). In my previous reports I informed the Security Council about the extensive liaison on operational matters at different levels. In addition, in September 2007, the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL commenced coordinated patrols in different locations within the area of operations. On 2 October, one such coordinated patrol intercepted a smuggling operation from the Golan Heights in the area of Shab'a village. It was later established that the smugglers were trying to transport commercial goods and diesel fuel. UNIFIL has also established co-located checkpoints with the Lebanese Armed Forces at two crucial entry points into the area of operations on the Litani River. Coordinated activities between the two forces are periodically reviewed and adjusted to maximize operational readiness, effectiveness and interoperability of units, while taking into account the existing command and control structures.

18. UNIFIL currently conducts almost 400 vehicle, foot and air patrols, day and night, on a 24-hour basis, throughout its area of operations in both rural and urban areas. In addition, UNIFIL maintains over 60 positions and a number of temporary checkpoints and observation posts, including in villages and populated areas. At the same time, the Lebanese Armed Forces continues to maintain four brigades and one artillery regiment. This significant deployment has continued, despite the additional demands placed on the Lebanese Armed Forces in other parts of the country during the reporting period, in particular in Nahr al-Bared. The Lebanese Armed Forces currently have over 100 checkpoints and permanent positions and carry out approximately 60 patrols within any given 24-hour period.

19. Cooperation and coordination between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces has also continued to expand to ensure that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River is free of unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons. Coordinated operations during this reporting period have resulted in the discovery of abandoned arms, ammunition and explosive devices, including 10 rockets with eight fuses and a launcher found in the area of Marjayoun and five anti-tank launchers in the area of Khiam. A number of bunkers, some containing rocket launchers, were also found. However, there were no signs that the installations had been recently used. The Lebanese Armed Forces continues to destroy or confiscate all arms and ammunition found south of the Litani River.

20. Israel maintains that Hizbullah has rebuilt its military presence and capacity, largely north of the Litani River, but also in the UNIFIL area of operations, through bringing arms across the Litani River. However, it has not provided UNIFIL with specific intelligence due to the sensitivity of its sources. For its part, UNIFIL, in collaboration with the Lebanese Armed Forces, immediately investigates any claims of alleged violations of resolution 1701 (2006) within its area of operations if specific information and evidence is received.

21. Ensuring that the area south of the Litani River is free of unauthorized armed personnel and weapons is a long-term endeavour. The recent attacks against UNIFIL and the June rocket attack against Israel show that hostile armed elements are present in, or still find a way into, the area of operations. In addition, armed elements are present in the Palestinian refugee camps in the area, posing a danger to UNIFIL and to stability on the ground. These incidents underline the importance of continuing and intensifying the efforts of the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL, with the necessary support of the international community. UNIFIL is currently planning additional security measures in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, with a focus on the main crossing points on the Litani River, including a gradual increase in the number of coordinated patrols and co-located checkpoints. The modus operandi is reviewed and adjusted, if deemed necessary, to maximize effectiveness, ensuring that there are no unauthorized armed personnel or weapons in the area of operations.

22. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continues to focus on performing maritime interdiction operations in Lebanese territorial waters in order to prevent the entry of unauthorized arms and related materiel. Since the Maritime Task Force assumed its mission in mid-October 2006, more than 10,000 ships have been hailed and queried, and the Lebanese authorities in port have inspected a total of 39 suspicious ships. There have been no reports of weapons smuggling at sea.

23. It should be noted that improving the abilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces, including both its land and naval components, is critical to the effective implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). In this regard, UNIFIL's overall objective is to have the Lebanese army and navy assume effective security control over the mission's area of operations and over Lebanese territorial waters, respectively. With this aim in mind, UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces have held a number of joint training workshops and exercises over the reporting period, including in search and rescue, mass casualty, naval logistical support and coordinated patrolling, and have developed a common training plan for future coordinated exercises. The training activities of the Maritime Task Force with the Lebanese navy have started to show encouraging results. The navy's improved capabilities should enable it to

gradually assume certain responsibilities and tasks presently performed by the Maritime Task Force.

24. As I have stated in previous reports, the Lebanese Armed Forces will require considerable international support if it is to become a more capable and better equipped force. During the reporting period, the army and navy components of the Lebanese Armed Forces received some international assistance, including ammunition and vehicles, on a bilateral basis. Further assistance is needed in connection with the provision of fuel, vehicles, arms and ammunition, radar, helicopters and surveillance equipment, including night vision systems. The navy will require appropriate maritime equipment, including patrol boats and the capacity to maintain a coastal radar organization, as well as further training.

25. Overall coordination with the Israel Defense Forces has been good and UNIFIL maintains a liaison office, manned by two officers, at the northern command headquarters of the defence forces in Zefat. A hotline between the Force Commander and his counterparts in the Israel Defense Forces is now operational, although, a liaison office in Tel Aviv has yet to be established. I urge that the liaison office be established as soon as possible in order to facilitate liaison and coordination with the Israel Defense Forces headquarters, the Israeli Ministry of Defense and other relevant authorities.

26. UNIFIL maintains close relations with the local population and provides humanitarian assistance, including medical and dental services, veterinary assistance, engineering and construction work and humanitarian mine clearance. In addition, UNIFIL is implementing a number of community projects funded through its budget. Both the military and the civilian components of UNIFIL maintain regular contacts with local authorities and community leaders to increase their understanding of the mission's mandated activities and operations on the ground and to address their concerns. At the same time, UNIFIL is making the necessary adjustments in its modus operandi in order to minimize disturbance to the civilian population. Maintaining good relations with the local population is critical if UNIFIL is to successfully implement resolution 1701 (2006). The planned deployment of both civil-military cooperation and military community outreach units is expected to further strengthen the mission's relations with the local population.

C. Disarming armed groups

27. In my last report I noted that there had been reports of suspected Hizbullah armed elements constructing new facilities north of the Litani River and in the Bekaa valley, where the Government of Lebanon has exclusive responsibility for security. The development of such infrastructure appears to be ongoing, according to recent reports brought to my attention by the Government of Israel. Hizbullah continues not to deny any of these charges.

28. According to the Government of Israel, Hizbullah has rearmed itself to a level higher than that which it had maintained prior to last year's conflict. It alleges that Hizbullah's long-range rocket force is stationed in areas north of the Litani River and that most of the new rockets supplies, including hundreds of Zilzal and Fajr generation rockets, have a range of 250 kilometres, enabling them to reach Tel Aviv and points further south. Israel also claims that Hizbullah has tripled its shore-to-sea

C-802 missiles and has established an air defence unit armed with ground-to-air missiles. Israel has stated that the nature and number of weapons in Hizbullah's control constitutes a strategic threat to its security and to the safety of its citizens.

29. Several speeches made by the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, Hassan Nasrallah, in the past few months seem to confirm these Israeli claims. Reports of rearming are a cause of great concern, posing serious challenges to the sovereignty, stability and independence of Lebanon and the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Senior Hizbullah officials have stated that comments by Hassan Nasrallah were made to serve as a deterrent to aggression rather than as threats to Israel.

30. In my most recent report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) (S/2007/629), I reported on the direct challenge that the actions of Fatah al-Islam represented to the sovereignty and stability of the Lebanese State. The Government of Lebanon has reported that over 200 Lebanese and non-Lebanese Fatah al-Islam fighters have been taken into custody and questioned. Their apparent intention to launch other attacks throughout the country, including against UNIFIL, and to further undermine the country's political stability is a stark reminder of the threat posed by this and by similar groups to Lebanon's already challenged sovereignty, as detailed in my above-mentioned report on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004). I note the positive stance taken by the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization to Lebanon in denouncing the actions of Fatah al-Islam in the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp and his full support for the stability and sovereignty of the Lebanese State.

31. As also described in my recent report to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), there are reports suggesting increased organization, mobilization and armed training among Lebanese parties in the context of the deteriorating political situation. In this regard, I take note of the determination expressed by Prime Minister Siniora in his letter of 8 October 2007 addressed to me that all government security agencies remain vigilant and determined to halt such activities among all political groups and parties equally.

32. With reference to paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006), I continue to believe that the disarmament of Hizbullah and other militias should take place through a Lebanese-led political process that will lead to the full restoration of the authority of the Government of Lebanon over all its territory so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon. While the question of Hizbullah's disarmament remains open and at the centre of the political debate, there has been no progress on this issue during the reporting period. The ongoing political crisis has further complicated the chances of gaining momentum on this issue.

D. Arms embargo

33. I am concerned by ongoing allegations regarding breaches of the arms embargo across the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Government of Israel has claimed that the transfer of sophisticated weaponry from the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic to Hizbullah across this border continues to the degree that Hizbullah has rearmed itself to a greater and more sophisticated extent than before.

34. In his letter of 8 October 2007 addressed to me, the Prime Minister of Lebanon indicated that "reportedly, significant amounts of weapons transferred from Syria during the July 2006 war, and probably in the period since then, have been made available to some parties with very close ties to Syria". The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has continued to deny any involvement in effecting breaches of the arms embargo.

35. The Government of Lebanon has reiterated its key interest in ensuring its control over all of its borders and preventing the unauthorized flow of weapons, munitions and personnel into the country. The Lebanese Minister of Defence and the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces have stated their determination to investigate allegations of weapons smuggling and have again requested that evidence to support these claims be shared with the Government or provided through the United Nations.

36. As indicated in my recent report to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and Fatah al-Intifada maintain military positions along the frontier between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, through which a certain number of Fatah al-Islam fighters are reported to have illegally entered Lebanon. This anomaly effectively gives such groups de facto control over the border at the expense of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity and is another illustration of the need for Lebanon to ensure full control over its borders.

37. In its presidential statement of 3 August 2007 (S/PRST/2007/29), the Security Council welcomed the recommendations of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team and requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Government of Lebanon, to assess their implementation and to update the Council on a regular basis. The present report provides my first such assessment.

38. I am encouraged by the initial progress that has been achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team. On 28 July, the Lebanese Council of Ministers decided to establish a common border force within the context of the pilot project led by Germany along Lebanon's northern border with the Syrian Arab Republic. The common border force brings together elements from the four principal security agencies responsible for border management and security, namely the Lebanese Armed Forces, which will nominate a Commander, the Internal Security Forces, which will nominate a Deputy Commander, General Security and Customs. This integrated structure is in line with the key recommendation of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team, namely that a multiagency mobile unit be established, and has further enhanced coordination and information sharing among Lebanon's security agencies.

39. The common border force will be responsible for the surveillance and control of Lebanon's northern border with the Syrian Arab Republic to ensure that the passage of all goods is restricted to legal crossing points only, preventing the smuggling of weapons, ammunition and prohibited material through the establishment of permanent and mobile observation points. To that end, it will draw on enhanced intelligence and analysis techniques, as recommended by the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team, to ensure control of the northern border and employ a rapid intervention capacity to fulfil its mission. Its work will be supported by an operations centre and guided by a shared intelligence and analysis unit. It is

anticipated that the force will be fully operational by November 2007 when the implementation phase of the pilot project is fully under way. Such increased integration among Lebanon's security organs, the more extensive use of risk analysis and a rapid intervention capacity are necessary for the establishment of any fully integrated border management system. Subsequent to an assessment phase in which the performance of the common border force will be reviewed, it is anticipated that its mandate will be extended to apply to Lebanon's eastern border with the Syrian Arab Republic.

40. A team of international experts led by Germany has continued to provide technical support and an extensive programme of training to the four security agencies. This comes as part of an international and comprehensive effort to enhance Lebanese border management capacity.

41. Certain technical improvements along Lebanon's eastern border with the Syrian Arab Republic have already been implemented through the installation of a scanner at the official border crossing point of Masnaa in July 2007. At the same time, the Lebanese Armed Forces continue to be deployed along Lebanon's eastern border with the Syrian Arab Republic where they carry out fixed and mobile patrols.

42. While I am encouraged by the determination of the Government of Lebanon to move forward on this issue, key aspects of the recommendations of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team remain to be implemented. I refer in particular to the need for full and absolute control over border crossing points, standard obligatory measures for checking, anti-corruption mechanisms, modification of infrastructure, the establishment of additional local border crossing points, the relocation of existing border crossing points to the border line and the provision of socio-economic programmes as an alternative to families' reliance on smuggling. It is of critical importance that Lebanon continue to implement the recommendations of the Assessment Team in full in order to enhance security arrangements along all its borders through an integrated border management system.

43. Effective border management is best achieved through a bilateral process. I note the letter of the Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister of 18 October describing the measures that the Syrian Arab Republic has taken along its border with Lebanon. The United Nations does not, however, have the means to independently corroborate the information contained in the letter.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

44. Since my last report to the Security Council, an additional 25 new cluster bomblet strike locations have been identified by the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre-South Lebanon. A total of 951 cluster bomblet strike locations have been recorded thus far, contaminating an estimated area of over 38 million square metres. As a result of the joint efforts of the Lebanese Armed Forces, 16 UNIFIL teams and 61 United Nations-contracted and bilaterally funded battle area clearance teams operating under the coordination of the Mine Coordination Centre, a total of 40 per cent of the surface and 21 per cent of the subsurface has been cleared, and more than 132,000 unexploded cluster munitions destroyed.

45. Since I last reported to the Security Council, five civilians have been injured by cluster munitions and two killed, including a six-year-old boy, Ali Dakdouk. In

addition, a UNIFIL mine clearance expert belonging to the French contingent and three civilian battle area clearance experts were also killed during this period while clearing cluster munitions. A total of 185 civilians and 32 mine clearance personnel have been injured and 25 civilians and 13 mine clearance personnel killed since the end of the 2006 war.

46. I regret to report once again that the Government of Israel has not yet responded to the repeated requests by United Nations senior officials for information regarding the strike data on cluster munitions utilized during the conflict in 2006. This data is of critical importance and would greatly enhance the rate of the clearance operations in southern Lebanon and reduce the risk to both civilians and mine clearance experts. I call yet again on the Government of Israel to provide this crucial and potentially life-saving information to the United Nations.

F. Abducted soldiers and prisoners

47. On 15 October 2007, Israel released a Lebanese citizen with alleged links to Hizbullah who had been detained during the war, together with the bodies of two members of Hizbullah killed during the fighting. On the Lebanese side, Hizbullah returned to the family the mortal remains of an Israeli citizen drowned in the Mediterranean Sea off Haifa, which, having been washed ashore further north, ultimately fell into its hands. In addition, Hizbullah provided preliminary information on other humanitarian questions with relevance to this facilitation.

48. These moves have been widely welcomed as encouraging steps of goodwill. I express my hope and firm expectation that these gestures will promote further decisive efforts to finally meet the humanitarian aspects of resolution 1701 (2006).

49. As I emphasized in my past reports on this issue, there is no justification for insisting on demands that clearly lie beyond the framework of this resolution. In addition, a solution of the more sensitive cases of the Lebanese detainees in Israel has to be found without further delay.

50. More than ever, compliance with the humanitarian demands of resolution 1701 (2006), especially the urgent release of the two abducted Israeli soldiers, is firmly expected and demanded by the international community.

G. Delineation of borders

51. In its resolution 1701 (2006), the Security Council requested me to develop, in liaison with relevant international actors and the concerned parties, proposals to implement the relevant provisions of the Taif accords and of its resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), including disarmament, and for the delineation of the international borders of Lebanon, especially in those areas where the border is disputed or uncertain, including by dealing with the Shab'a Farms area.

52. I have continued to stress to the Governments of the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon that the final determination of their common borders is important for their peaceful coexistence and good neighbourliness. I have called on both Governments to take steps urgently, in keeping with international law, to reach an agreement on their common border. The reactivation of the Lebanese-Syrian border committee, as suggested by President Assad in my meeting with him in Damascus on 24 April,

would be a step in the right direction. In his letter dated 16 July 2007, the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic stated that Syrian and Lebanese border control officials have met on 12 occasions during the period from 6 December 2005 to 30 April 2007. The Government of Lebanon, however, has indicated to me that the agendas of these meetings have not addressed the question of border determination.

53. In its presidential statements of 12 December 2006, 17 April 2007 and 3 August 2007 (S/PRST/2006/52, S/PRST/2007/12 and S/PRST/2007/29), the Security Council has taken note and expressed appreciation for the efforts I have exercised toward process that aims to investigate the cartographic, legal and political implications of the interim proposal contained in the seven-point plan of the Government of Lebanon regarding the Shab'a Farms area. I continue to work in this regard. I am pleased to report that, based on the best available information, the senior cartographer has arrived at a provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area, which is explained below. The Council should note that this exercise has not been aimed at delineating international boundaries as regards to the Shab'a Farms but should assist Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic in their efforts to agree upon their common border.

Shab'a Farms area

54. As reported previously, last year I appointed a senior cartographer who assumed the lead in reviewing and analysing a comprehensive collection of archival documents and maps provided by the Lebanese Government on the Shab'a Farms. A list of the materials found in the Lebanese submission is attached as an annex to the present report. The cartographer's work focused on achieving an accurate definition of the Shab'a Farms area.

55. I should note here that the Syrian Arab Republic has yet to respond to my request, formally submitted in a letter dated 3 October 2007, for specific documents that would assist in the precise plotting of the geographical coordinates of the relevant line.

56. In my last report to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), I noted that the Government of Israel had indicated its willingness to agree to my request to enable the senior cartographer to visit the area. This visit took place on 5 September. In the course of the visit, the senior cartographer was able to gather a visual impression of the physiography of the region, in particular the configuration of the slope of Wadi al-Aasal. This process was useful in that the visual overview was consistent with the results of the analysis of the data submitted by the Government of Lebanon.

57. Administratively, the village of Shab'a is located in the eastern edge of the Hasbaiya Caza, subdistrict. The area, which has a harsh environment, characterized by poor soil and meagre water resources, is sparsely populated. The village lies near a fault line, a significant physical feature in the area. The fault runs in a north-easterly-south-westerly direction, approximately 20 kilometres north and south of the village on the western foothills of Mount Hermon (Jebel esh-Sheikh). The principal course of the fault is marked by two wadis. North of Shab'a it is Wadi Aayoun Jenaim, which runs south-west and then turns west just south of the village, from which point it is called Wadi Shab'a. South of Shab'a, it is Wadi al-Aasal, which emerges from the south-western slopes of Mount Hermon (Jebel esh-Sheikh)

and runs west towards the former hamlet of Mazraat Barakhta, located about four kilometres south of Shab'a.

58. The term Shab'a Farms generally refers to former hamlets, grazing areas and some cultivated land south-west of Shab'a village, on the western slopes of Wadi al-Aasal and on the southern slopes of Jebel Rous and Jebel Soummaq. Based on the information available, the senior cartographer has provisionally concluded that the Shab'a Farms area extends north-east from Moughr Shab'a village and north-west from Wadi al-Aasal. Thus, it is now possible to state that a review and analysis of recent evidence can provide the basis for a provisional definition of the geographical extent of the Shab'a Farms area as follows: starting from the turning point of the 1920 French line located just south of the village of El Majidiye; from there continuing south-east along the 1946 Moughr Shab'a-Shab'a boundary until reaching the thalweg of the Wadi al-Aasal; thence following the thalweg of the wadi north-east until reaching the crest of the mountain north of the former hamlet Mazraat Barakhta and reconnecting with the 1920 line.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

59. As noted in my previous report (S/2007/392), UNIFIL has reached a high level of operational readiness and the current strength and deployment enables the troops to effectively carry out their mandated tasks throughout the area of operations.

60. Against the background of attacks against UNIFIL, and in the light of continuous threats from some militant groups, I attach the utmost importance to the employment of risk mitigating measures to enhance the security and safety of the mission's military personnel, civilian staff, and installations. These measures were supported by the Security Council in its presidential statement of 3 August 2007 (S/PRST/2007/29), as well as in its resolution 1773 (2007).

61. In the meantime, UNIFIL has continued to reinforce its installations throughout its area of operations, as well as in Beirut, and is implementing enhanced security procedures and deploying additional equipment for the protection and security of all of its military and civilian personnel. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNIFIL, in consultation with the troop-contributing countries, are currently engaged in ensuring that UNIFIL is sufficiently equipped with urgently needed additional assets, including equipment to detect and jam remote-controlled explosive devices, and that it has the capacity to conduct specialized investigations. They are also looking into the possibility of the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles, which could also be utilized by the Lebanese Armed Forces, as an additional means to mitigate risk to UNIFIL.

62. The circumstances in which the newly expanded UNIFIL was established required innovative measures that led to the creation of the Strategic Military Cell at United Nations Headquarters and of the Maritime Task Force off the coast of Lebanon. These elements have been critical to the successful implementation of UNIFIL's mandate over the last 12 months. At the request of the General Assembly, on 26 April 2007 I submitted an interim evaluation of the Strategic Military Cell (A/61/883), which will be supplemented early next year by a more comprehensive review.

63. At the same time, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is undertaking a ship-to-task analysis of the Maritime Task Force to ensure that the mission's naval assets are optimally equipped to carry out its maritime tasks, as requested by the Government of Lebanon subsequent to the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006).

64. In this connection, I appeal to the UNIFIL troop-contributing countries to provide the remaining outstanding requirements for the mission. In addition, over the last months, several troop- and maritime-contributors have departed, scaled down or announced their departure from UNIFIL. While expressing my gratitude for the roles they have played, I am concerned that these departures may leave a gap in UNIFIL's land and maritime resources.

V. Observations

65. The deployment and activities of the Lebanese Armed Forces and an enhanced UNIFIL in southern Lebanon have brought an important measure of stability to the area, preventing a recurrence of hostilities along the Blue Line. I am grateful to the 30 troop-contributing countries that have made this possible. UNIFIL has been successful in implementing a number of key objectives contained in resolution 1701 (2006). In this context, I emphasize the need for continued support to UNIFIL, including the commitment to contribute the necessary troops and assets to enable the Force to efficiently perform all of its mandated activities on land and at sea. The Security Council, in its resolution 1773 (2007), also underlined that UNIFIL should have at its disposal all necessary means and equipment to carry out its mandate. I recognize the increasing demands on troop contributors as United Nations peacekeeping efforts elsewhere in the world expand in scope and scale, but stress that it will be critical for UNIFIL to retain its current capabilities and remain at full strength.

66. At the same time, international support to the Lebanese Armed Forces remains vital to the successful implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Since the adoption of this resolution, the Lebanese Armed Forces has implemented a critical set of tasks: its historic deployment to southern Lebanon; its role along the Lebanese-Syrian border; and responding to the various security crises that have plagued Lebanon. It has responded effectively to these simultaneous demands within the constraints of its lack of resources and overstretched capacities. I urge the international community to enhance its bilateral support to the Lebanese Armed Forces to assist it in its role as the backbone for the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

67. I am encouraged that cooperation between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces has been further enhanced during the reporting period, including through the establishment of co-located checkpoints and coordinated patrolling and measures to increase rapid response to potential hostile activities. These activities need to be increased in number and scope.

68. Over the past months the Lebanese Armed Forces, through the bloody confrontation that pitted it in Nahr al-Bared against the terrorists of Fatah al-Islam, has defeated a major threat to the country's stability and sovereignty. In doing so, it has emerged as a vehicle of stability and territorial defence at a time of increased political uncertainty in Lebanon. I would like to pay tribute to the 168 soldiers who gave their lives in service of their country and to express my gratitude for those

countries that extended support to the Lebanese Armed Forces throughout these challenges. However, as demonstrated during the fighting in Nahr al-Bared, it is crucial to bolster the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces with relevant equipment and weaponry.

69. Four months after the terrorist attack that killed six UNIFIL peacekeepers, I remain extremely concerned for the safety and security of mission personnel. I urge all parties to abide by their obligation to respect the safety and security of all UNIFIL and other United Nations personnel, including by avoiding any course of action that might endanger United Nations personnel and by ensuring that UNIFIL is accorded full freedom of movement within its area of operations. I urge the Government of Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces to continue to provide all support necessary to UNIFIL.

70. I note the good cooperation that UNIFIL has received from both the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces within the tripartite mechanism meetings, especially relating to the pilot project to visibly mark the Blue Line. I am pleased by the initial progress achieved in visibly marking the Blue Line on the ground. Doing so will help to build trust, decrease tension and contribute to the reduction of incidents and inadvertent violations of the Blue Line. I encourage the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces to continue this important endeavour with UNIFIL in a constructive and flexible manner.

71. I remain concerned, however, at the inability of either party to find a way forward over the issue of the northern part of the village of Ghajar, which the Israel Defense Forces continues to occupy in violation of its obligations under resolution 1701 (2006). Failure to make progress on this issue could become a source of tension and carry the potential for incidents in the future. I urge both the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces to engage with the UNIFIL Force Commander in a constructive manner in order to find a solution to this issue.

72. Israel's continued violations of Lebanese airspace not only constitute repeated violations of Security Council resolutions but also undermine the credibility of the United Nations as well as the Lebanese Armed Forces in the eyes of the local population and damage efforts to reduce tension, build confidence and stabilize the situation in southern Lebanon. I once again call on Israel to cease its air violations, and call on all parties to fully implement resolution 1701 (2006) and respect the Blue Line in its entirety.

73. As stressed in my recent report on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) (S/2007/629), I remain concerned by the conditions facing displaced Palestinians from Nahr al-Bared camp and, in general, by the living conditions in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. It is imperative that the close cooperation that has been established between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Lebanese authorities continue for the welfare of the Palestinian refugees. I commend both the Government of Lebanon and the Palestine Liberation Organization for their role in re-establishing security in the camps, but call on them to undertake concrete and immediate measures towards significantly improving the conditions in which the refugee population lives, without prejudice to the settlement of the Palestinian refugee question in the context of an eventual Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement. I also call upon Member States to contribute generously to appeals by United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and by the Government of Lebanon, which remain critically

underfunded, for the provision of immediate relief assistance to the displaced population of the Nahr al-Bared camp and for its reconstruction.

74. In its presidential statement of 3 August 2007 (S/PRST/2007/29), the Security Council expressed concern at any allegation of rearming of Lebanese and non-Lebanese armed groups and militias and reiterated that there should be no sale or supply of arms and related material to Lebanon except as authorized by its Government. In this regard, it expressed concern about the statement by Hizbullah that it retains the military capacity to strike all parts of Israel, and called on all parties to refrain from statements and activities that could jeopardize the cessation of hostilities. I remain concerned about the ongoing reports that point to breaches of the arms embargo, which are a serious violation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). All Member States of the region, in particular the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran, have a key responsibility in this regard. Such violations risk further destabilizing Lebanon and the whole region. The Syrian Arab Republic has a shared responsibility in controlling its borders with Lebanon and implementing paragraph 15 of resolution 1701 (2006). I recommend that the Syrian Arab Republic take concrete steps to act on its stated intention of working with European Governments on improving border security and, in particular, further developing a mechanism either with the European Union or the United Nations to enhance technical facilities and arrangements along the shared border between the two countries. Such arrangements would be beneficial for the security of both countries.

75. Hizbullah's maintenance of an infrastructure of arms that remains separate from the State has had an adverse effect on the efforts of the Government of Lebanon to assert its exclusive control over the entire territory of Lebanon, in accordance with provisions of Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). While I remain convinced that progress on this issue should be made through a Lebanese-led political process, dealing with this factor must not be delayed. Addressing Hizbullah's disarmament remains critical to the extension of the authority of the Government of Lebanon over all its territory.

76. Without an effective and integrated border management system to prevent the unauthorized smuggling of weapons, munitions and personnel, Lebanon's security and sovereignty will remain prone to the abuses that resulted in the confrontation with Fatah al-Islam. In this regard, I am encouraged by the notable first strides that the Government of Lebanon has taken towards enhancing its border management capacities. I recommend that it complete its implementation of the recommendations of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team by taking further concrete steps towards an effective and integrated border-control system along all its borders. I reiterate the readiness of the United Nations to continue working closely with the Government of Lebanon, including through the deployment of further technical missions to Lebanon, as required. I further urge the international community to continue providing Lebanon with the necessary bilateral technical support, including equipment, necessary to achieve this critical objective. Finally, I would like to express my deep appreciation for Germany's leadership of the pilot project in northern Lebanon and to all the other donor countries that have provided bilateral support to Lebanon in this context.

77. As noted in previous reports, Israel has yet to provide detailed strike data that would give the exact location, quantity and type of cluster munitions utilized during

last summer's conflict. The increasing number of deaths and injuries of Lebanese civilians and mine clearance personnel, and the continued threat to lives and livelihoods of the people of south Lebanon from the cluster munitions, serve as stark reminders of the importance of Israel immediately providing UNIFIL with the necessary strike data. This would greatly assist the tremendous work being performed by the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre in cleaning up the area from the estimated 1 million unexploded cluster munitions. In spite of assurances by Israel that steps are being taken to provide the required data, the information has so far not been forthcoming. Yet again, I call upon the Government of Israel to urgently provide this vital humanitarian information.

78. It is my hope and firm expectation that the humanitarian gestures exchanged on 15 October will promote decisive action to finally meet the humanitarian demands of resolution 1701 (2006). Compliance with the humanitarian demands of resolution 1701 (2006), especially the release of the two abducted Israeli soldiers, is expected and demanded by the international community.

79. I call again on the Syrian Arab Republic to take the necessary steps with Lebanon to delineate their common border in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006) and to immediately re-activate the Lebanese-Syrian border committee for this purpose. I also pledge United Nations readiness to assist with expertise in any way that the parties would deem appropriate.

80. I also reiterate my belief in the importance of an early initiation of a process between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic that will lead to the establishment of full diplomatic relations in fulfilment of resolution 1680 (2006) and that will further consolidate the arrangements laid out in resolution 1701 (2006).

81. I am pleased with the progress of work of the senior cartographer in arriving at a provisional definition for the Shab'a Farms area. I want to thank the Lebanese Government for providing documentation in this regard and the Government of Israel for facilitating the visit of the cartographer to the area.

82. This report is the first time that the United Nations has published the provisional definition of the senior cartographer. I intend to consult with all the relevant parties and the members of the Security Council on further developments. In this regard, I recall my hope that this effort will strengthen a diplomatic process aimed at resolving this key issue, in accordance with the relevant provisions of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). Progress on the issue, however, cannot be separated from the principles and elements required for the permanent ceasefire and long-term solution identified in resolution 1701 (2006).

83. I would like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, for his letter, dated 9 August 2007, communicating his exchange on this issue with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and to express my intent to discuss it directly with the Syrian Government.

84. Lebanon's enduring political crisis, now in its eleventh month, has seriously hampered the normal work of its institutions and has impeded further progress on many of the key issues of resolution 1701 (2006), which need to be tackled through national dialogue. The election of a President before the end of President Emile Lahoud's mandate on 24 November is an important milestone that will pave the way for further normalization of political life in Lebanon, for effective dialogue on

issues of national concern and for the unimpeded functioning of Lebanon's institutions.

85. In this context, I call upon all Lebanese leaders to take up their responsibilities in achieving unity and conciliation through a constructive political dialogue enabling the election of a President who would enjoy the broadest possible acceptance, in accordance with the constitutional rules and time frame and without foreign interference. I am concerned by the looming scenarios of two competing administrations in Lebanon or of a constitutional vacuum. Both situations must be avoided as they represent a grave threat to Lebanon's stability, sovereignty and political independence.

86. The months to come will be key for the achievement of progress regarding the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). Greater progress is required on key issues that are central to the achievement of a permanent ceasefire an a longer-term solution, such as the release of the abducted Israeli soldiers and of the Lebanese prisoners, the enforcement of the arms embargo, the cessation of Israeli air violations of Lebanese sovereignty, the delineation of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic and the re-initiation of a national dialogue through which the questions relating to the national defence strategy, the weapons of Hizbullah and armed groups outside of the State's control would be addressed. A rapid resolution of the grave political crisis, which would lead to domestic political stability, is a key ingredient for progress regarding some of these key issues.

87. The influence that the overall region has on the domestic situation in Lebanon, and Lebanon on the region, remains evident. It is my profound belief that all possible efforts must be exerted to attain a just, lasting and comprehensive peace for all peoples in the Middle East. This, together with the goal of full restoration of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon, remain contingent upon one another.

Annex

Evidence of boundary at Shab'a submitted by Lebanon

Date	*Document*
Under Ottoman rule	
1851	Map of "Modern Palestine", scale 1:1,077,120 — from an Atlas published by J & F Tallis, New York
1862	"Carte de Liban", scale 1:200,000 — French military map by Captain Gélis, published by Lemercier, Paris. 1924 edition overprinted with the mandate lines
Unknown	Ottoman document
Under French mandate: 1918-1943	
3 August 1920	Decree No. 299
31 August 1920	Decree No. 318
9 April 1925	Decree No. 3066
23 May 1926	Lebanese Constitution
1932	Sketch map of mayors
8 September 1933	Decree No. 115
12 June 1934	Birkett Mardj El-Mann agreement
12 June 1934	Forest of Karm El-Shoumar agreement
3 February 1935	Decree No. 5
4 February 1935	Decree No. 27/LR
10 November 1937	Letter from Pierre Bart, Administrative Consul of Southern Lebanon, to the chief of the Special Services in Qnaitra; with 1:100,000 scale sketch map
3 June 1938	Letter from the representative of the High Commissioner to the French Prime Minister
15 June 1938	Report of Lt. La Croix (Qnaitra) and Capt. May (Marjayoun) on resolving the dispute between Shab'a and Joubbata ez Zait
25 June 1939	Letter from Capt. De Bernonville, chief of the Special Services in Qnaitra, to the chief inspector of the provinces of Damascus and Houran; with 1:100,000 sketch map
1939	Letter from Schoeffler, Governor of Colonies, to Puaux, High Commissioner in Syria and Lebanon

Date	*Document*
From independence to occupation: 1943-1967	
21 February 1944	Letter from mayor of Shab'a, Khalid Al Khateeb, to the President of Lebanon
3 April 1944	Letter from estate authorities requesting the convening of a Lebanese-Syrian Border Committee
1945	Cadastral map of Nkhaile village, 1:2,000
20 February 1946	Cadastral map of the Moughr Shab'a area, 1:5,000
26 March 1946	Proceedings of the meeting of the Joint Property Committee
1949	Decree No. 104
18 January 1951	Passage permit issued by the Customs director in southern Banias
Unknown	Building permit signed by Commissioner of Marjayoun
29 June 1961	Decree No. 6936 (copy not submitted)
25 November 1963	Decree No. 14539 (copy not submitted)
27 February 1964	Report No. 3 of the Lebanese-Syrian Land Committee
17 June 1966	Report of the Council of Ministers on the work of the Lebanese-Syrian Joint Border Committee
21 February 1967	Report No. 3 of the Joint Technical Committee
30 March 1967	Decree No. 7008
February 1970	Report of the Lebanese-Syrian Joint Border Committee

Other documents submitted include 169 records pertaining to land ownership in and around Shab'a and Nkaile, dating from 1898 to 2000, and a map of the region at the scale of 1:25,000.